

Those 30 Years

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Those 30 Years

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Summary

Stanford can't keep 30 years of emotions pent up any longer. When his brother pushes him over the edge, he may get more than what he had anticipated.

Notes

This is one of the oldest ideas that I had for these two. It's been sitting in my computer all planned out for nearly a month now, glad to see it finally finished. ALSO GIGANTIC THANKS TO BRATJEDI OVER ON TUMBLR FOR BEING A BAE AND BETA READING FOR ME. Edit 8/6/2015: Fixed the name switch! Stanford is the Author, and Stanley is Mr. Mystery.

“Do you remember that time we kissed as teenagers?” Stanley mused, taking a sip from his half finished Pitt soda.

His brothers head whipped toward him in shock. That was out of the blue.

Ford put a hand to the back of his head and awkwardly looked away.

“Why are you bringing *that* up?” He grumbled, nervously playing with the hair on the back of his neck.

Stanley shrugged and scratched the top of his head, fez uncharacteristically missing. He never took his eyes off of the stars they were sitting under, leaning against the hood of the STNLYMBL. Just like they had done so many years ago.

“What else made you want to go to Lookout Point?” Stanley counter-questioned, smiling as he took another sip of his drink. Ford glared at him from behind his glasses as he slurped as loud as he could just to annoy him.

“I see you haven’t changed a bit.” Ford scoffed, crossing his arms across his chest and rolling his eyes.

“Not at all. Now answer the question.” Lee insisted, finally taking a sidelong glance at his vexed brother.

“Nothing in particular... just- we haven’t gone in so long, I thought we’d-” Stanford starts, but Lee cuts him off.

“Stanford, you’re not a real nostalgic kind of guy. Tell me the *truth*.” Stanley looks at him hard, eyes level with his own.

Ford stares back at him, running over the things he could say in his head. All options weren’t going to be enough to convince his brother to drop it.

After a while, Ford gives in with a huff.

“*Alright!* Alright. Yes, I was thinking about that when I suggested Lookout Point.”

Stanley’s eyes narrow. “Why?”

“*Why-*” Ford stumbles his words, “I don’t know, Lee, maybe I just thought-”

“Thought what?”

“If I *knew*, I would tell you!” Stanford snaps, pushing himself up off the hood of the car. His fingers run through his hair and he starts to pace, kicking up dirt.

Stan’s features soften as he watches his brother pace back and forth. He swirls the soda in his can before he decides to speak.

“You thought it might happen again.” There was no questioning tone in his voice. This was a statement.

Ford freezes with his back facing Stanley. He stares for a long while at the looming shadow the headlights are causing him to cast.

After a long pause, he finally says...

“I did.”

They both pause again. Ford glances over his shoulder to see Stan shaking his head and sighing.

“Ford...”

Those words set him off. He had heard his name in that tone plenty of times from Lee, and he knew exactly what followed after it every time.

“Don’t start with the *’Ford’* talk again, alright!” Stanford bursts out, whirling around to face his brother, sudden anger welling up in him.

“*Whoa*, hey-” Lee exclaims in surprise, but Ford is speaking over him already.

“*I know! I get it!* I shouldn’t hold these *feelings* for you!” He yells, throwing his arms into the air in frustration.

“Wait!” Stan tries again, holding hands up to his brother as if he’s trying to calm a panicked dog.

“But I can’t *help* it, Stanley!” His voice cracks as agony mixes in with his outrage. Stan backs up against the car when Ford stomps towards him, arms fisted at his sides.

“*Ford!*” Lee yelps worriedly at his brothers sudden advancement on him.

Ford gets straight into Stanley’s face, looking to be either on the verge of tears or on the verge of punching him. Knowing his brother, it might actually be both.

“I can’t help that when I look at you I just wanna embrace you!” He loudly confesses, eyes watering. “I can’t help that the sound of your voice brings me to a new high!”

Stanley just watches his brother gush it out, awestruck and too stunned to say anything.

“Or that all those...” Ford pauses and goes back to pacing. “All those 30 *goddamn* years in that *god forsaken* portal I- I wasn’t concerned for *my* safety!” He jabs a finger to his chest, looking at Lee with an insane look in his eyes.

With a dramatic swing of his hand, he points at Lee, as if he was accusing him. “I was thinking about *you!*”

Stanley's eyes widen, and they stare at each other for a moment. Stanford's panting from his outburst, before his eyes well up with tears.

He puts his head in his hands as he tries to stop himself from doing any more damage, but the words just keep pouring out.

"Where you were, how you were doing." His voice is wobbly as he continues to yell out all of his pent up emotions. "Were you eating alright, did you get enough sleep?"

"All this time, I was fighting *monsters* and-and *aliens*, and the only thing I could think about was-*was*-" Ford laughs, a short barking laugh, disbelieving his own ridiculousness. "Whether or not you had enough money for*gas*!"

It all comes to a stop after that. Lee fiddles with the pop tab on his soda, in a silent daze after what he just heard. He's at a loss for words.

Stanford stands there catching his breath and slowly calming himself down. He really didn't mean to let all that out, but after 30 years of holding it in, it was almost inevitable that this would happen.

Lee doesn't look up as his brother sighs and walks back over to the car. It weighs down as he leans back against it. He brings his palms up to rub the tears from his eyes, causing his glasses to go awry.

The only sound between them for the longest time is Stanford's sniffles and Stanley's occasional sip from his can. Lee could tell that his brother wasn't finished yet, so he didn't say a word. It didn't matter, because he wouldn't know what to say anyways.

After a while, Ford stopped sniffing back tears every few minutes and his breathing got less erratic.

"The worst part..." Ford's quiet words break the silence, and Lee turns to look at his brother. "The worst times were when I thought about *us*."

They make eye contact for a moment, but Lee can't stand to look at his brother's frowning face for longer than he needed to and looked back to the ground.

"About what we went through together. Our adventures..." Ford says with a far off look, solemnly reminiscing about what they used to get up to when they were younger. A small smile shows up for a split second before it turns back to a hard frown.

"Me disappearing... It must have *destroyed* you. It destroyed *me*." Lee lowers his head. It really did.

"I kept thinking... Forget about me. I wouldn't want you to suffer because of me, just forget I even existed. *It would be better that way*." He says with despair.

Lee wanted to tell him that it would be worse that way, but he waited patiently for his brother to continue.

“But at the same time, the thought of you forgetting about me...” Ford swallows the lump that formed in his throat. “It would make it hard to *breathe*.”

They turned to each other and locked eyes once more. Tears were making Ford's eyes wet once again.

“I couldn't bear to think that I no longer existed to the man that *is* my existence.”

It goes quiet between them after those heavy words. Stanley sets down his long finished soda and lets the words stew in his brain. The air seemed to be choking them the longer they went without words.

Finally, Stan clears his throat, breaking the overwhelming silence.

“You know... When you went missing, I almost lost my mind looking for you.” Lee didn't know where he was going with this, but he felt like he needed to reassure his brother in some way.

Stanford waited for Lee to continue hopefully. He was just glad his brother didn't punch him in the face over his outburst.

“At first, it was all I did. Night and day, trying to get the machine to work, out looking for those damn journals. Thanks for that, by the way.” Stanley added, glaring sideways at his brother. Ford gives a sheepish look.

“I couldn't get you off my mind. Every time I looked in the mirror it reminded me that you were gone. That you were out there in another dimension, on your own. You could be hurt, or possibly even-” The words catch in Stan's throat and he shakes his head. “That's why I kept at it,” Lee turns to his brother and gives him a warm smile “and I'm glad I did.”

“I never forgot about you, Stanford. You were all I could think about.”

Ford draws a blank at what he just heard. It was delivered much more calmly from Lee, and it wasn't as blatant, but it was all saying the same thing. His eyes widen in realisation.

“*You mean?*” He asks skeptically, some part of him telling him that this had to be a trick.

“Yeah. I guess you could say I was pretty smitten with you, too.” Stan says with a smile, glancing back at his brother's shocked face.

“Holy *shit*.” Ford's legs go weak and he falls back onto the hood of the car with a '*thunk*'. He puts a hand to his forehead and stares at the sky, slack jawed, running over this new information.

He loved him back. The feelings were returned. It was like someone just took a sledgehammer to his heart.

Lee awkwardly drums his fingers on the car as his brother laid there awestruck. A quick glance at his watch tells him they should have been home 30 minutes ago.

Hesitantly, he nudges his brothers leg with his own. Ford jerks out of his stupor and quickly sits up.

“Let’s get back home.” Lee says as he walks around the car and opens the drivers side door. It takes a second, but Ford joins him in the car, still dazed from this new information. A wide smile spreads across his face as Stan starts the car.

When Lee places his hand on the gear shift to shift into drive, Ford places his hand over his.

Stanley jumps in his seat and turns to Ford with his eyebrows raised. The look on his face tells him exactly what he’s thinking.

“You’re gonna do it, aren’t you?” Just as he finishes his sentence, Ford yanks him across the car into a smiling kiss.

To Ford’s surprise and utter delight, Stan puts a hand on his shoulder and kisses right back.

The kiss was short and nothing special, but it was still electric.

They pull apart and gaze into each others eyes, faces inches apart, before Ford settles back into his seat with a smug smile.

“Got that out of your system?” Stan quips, and Ford gives him a dorky smile and a nod.

Stan returns the smile and chuckles as he shifts the car into drive and they peel out of Lookout Point.

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